

# Selecting a Logger

**Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry**



It is important for a landowner to select the right logger, one who:

- Has a reputation for honesty and good work
- Uses environmentally sound practices
- Will abide by the provisions of your contract
- Has the right equipment and skills to do the job
- Has proper safety equipment, places a high priority on safety and carries insurance

It is also important for the landowner to understand the pressures a logger faces:

- A huge investment in equipment,
- Breakdowns
- Highly competitive timber purchasing
- The risk that timber will not have the quality anticipated
- Shifting markets
- Wet weather, a high risk of injury, high insurance costs, and competition from less scrupulous loggers who use substandard practices or don't carry workers' compensation insurance.

The "good ol' boy" method is not the best way to pick a logger. Family and friends who log, or loggers recommended by them, often don't pan out. This can lead to hard feelings as well as damage to the land and financial loss.

A good place to start is to acquire a list of Master Loggers from the Tennessee Forestry Association (615-883-3832) or your local Area Forester. These loggers have completed a five-day training session that includes how to use the State's logging guides, or Best Management Practices (BMPs). Not only will following BMPs protect your land, it will help protect you from liability that can result from violation of State Water Quality Laws. Horse or mule loggers might not have had this training, but their method can have less impact on soil than tractors or skidders.

Talk to loggers personally and try to get a feel for their personality and values.

Ask for several references, including landowners they have logged for and mills they have sold to.

As you narrow down your choices, visit property they are logging or have just finished.

Questions to ask loggers:

- How long have you been in business?
- How long have the crew members worked for you?
- Do you carry workers' compensation and liability insurance? Can I see proof?
- What kind of equipment will you use? How does it match up with my site?
- Do you pre-plan skid trail locations?
- How will you protect "no-cut" trees?
- When and how would you cross a stream?
- What will my land look like after you're done?
- Do you sub-contract sales? How do you ensure quality?
- What BMPs do you normally use? Which would be important on my sale?
- How would you handle timber trespass?

Questions to ask references. Did the logger

- Make timely payments
- Fulfill verbal and written agreements?
- Communicate well, listen to concerns? answer questions, explain things?
- Seem flexible and responsive?
- Delay excessively?
- Avoid damaging trees and improvements?
- Restore, repair and clean up the site before leaving?
- Seem concerned about environmental matters?
- Stop or modify operations appropriately in wet weather?
- Would you have him cut your timber again? Why or why not?